



CREATING A VIBRANT DEMOCRACY



COMMON CAUSE

Holding Power Accountable

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2012 AND 2013

“Our nation’s founders did not leave us a completed task...they left us a beginning. It is our obligation to define and dislodge the modern obstacles to the fulfillment of our founding principles. Because, as visionary as they were, our founders could not have foreseen how dominant special interests would become through the accumulation of wealth and power, and through skillful secret dealings with government officials.

“In the face of this, people like you and me — people who reject apathy and cynicism — must join forces to fight for open and accountable government. How?
By joining Common Cause and supporting our efforts to create direct and immediate changes in the political system.”

— COMMON CAUSE FOUNDER, JOHN W. GARDNER

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“Adversity is a tough teacher. It tests our character, our intellect and our resilience. Common Cause endured its share of adversity in the past year; I’m proud to say we’ve passed all of its tests.”

Dear Friends of Common Cause:

Adversity is a tough teacher. It tests our character, our intellect and our resilience.

Common Cause endured its share of adversity in the past year; I’m proud to say we’ve passed all of its tests.

The sudden death in April 2013 of our president and friend, Bob Edgar, brought out the best in Common Cause’s National Governing Board, staff and most importantly you — our members and supporters. All rallied to continue the work Bob so ably led; together we kept Common Cause in the forefront of battles to combat the corrupting influence of big money in politics, protect voting rights, hold public officials and institutions to the highest ethical standards, and encourage the free flow of information so vital to a healthy democracy.

On the policy front, we were particularly challenged by heightened gridlock in the US Senate stemming from unprecedented abuse of the filibuster rule. Common Cause was a key leader in intense lobbying and on a grassroots education campaign with coalition partners that culminated in a historic Senate vote in November 2013 to end filibusters of executive branch and most judicial nominees. We continue this work with a federal lawsuit still in play that challenges the filibuster’s constitutionality. Read more about this suit on page 16.

As corporate money poured into the 2012 mid-term elections, Common Cause shone a spotlight on another less-noticed but still-powerful source of corporate influence on politics and public policy: The American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC. Working with the Center for Media and Democracy, Common Cause exposed the secret inner workings and corporate money behind this group that teams big business leaders with conservative state lawmakers, who work together in back rooms to write laws that will benefit their bottom line, not the rest of us. You can read about the Internal Revenue Service complaint Common Cause filed against ALEC on page 15.

We achieved all this while building on numerous 2012 victories. Our campaign to overturn the Supreme Court’s disastrous Citizens United decision has now gained voter and/or elected official endorsements in 16 states and hundreds of localities. In the face of widespread voter suppression, Common Cause recruited thousands of volunteers in 18 states in a massive Election Day effort to protect voting rights and led the way to expand voter participation by passing online voter registration bills in multiple states, as well as expanding early voting and same-day voter registration.

We ended 2013 on a high note with the selection of a proven, visionary leader, Miles Rapoport, as our new president. You’ll be hearing a lot from him, and I can promise you’ll be impressed with Miles’ energy, intellect and commitment to strengthening our democracy.

Our work is more important than ever. I’m pleased to pursue it with you.

Best wishes,

Robert Reich
National Governing Board Chair

Dear Friends:

I became president of Common Cause in March 2014, after the years covered in this report. The sudden, unexpected death of my predecessor and friend, Bob Edgar, left big shoes to fill. But throughout this report, you'll find evidence that Bob's energy, leadership and good humor have given us the tools we need to do even more great things.

The work reflected in these pages is exciting, challenging and absolutely vital to our nation's future. I'm delighted to join you as we strive to continue and strengthen Common Cause's essential work in the future.

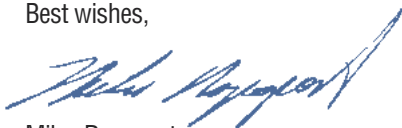
Throughout my years in Connecticut government, and through the last 13 years as the president of Demos, I have been an admirer and participant in Common Cause's great work. And I'm convinced that Americans are increasingly concerned about, and ready to act on, the issues that have animated Common Cause since our founding more than 40 years ago.

Americans know that government "of, by and for the people" cannot long endure unless citizens are engaged, informed and empowered to act. More and more of them understand that government at every level is dominated by the wealthiest 1 percent of Americans, major corporations and other special interest groups. They see that our political inequality — the influence gap between major political donors and the public at large — is directly related to economic inequality — the chasm between the handful of super-rich Americans and the millions struggling to get in or stay in the middle class.

I'm equally certain that Common Cause, in partnership with other reform-minded organizations, has a critical role to play in attacking these problems and strengthening our democracy. Thanks to our Washington office, our 35 state organizations and our network of supporters and activists in all 50 states, we command the attention of decision-makers on Capitol Hill and in statehouses and courthouses from coast-to-coast.

I look forward to meeting as many of you personally as I can, and to staying in touch. My email address is president@commoncause.org. We have plenty to do together. Let's get on with it.

Best wishes,



Miles Rapoport
President



"From his time in Connecticut to his work with Demos, Miles Rapoport has fought to lessen inequality and improve our electoral system. A champion of every voter's rights, Miles exemplifies the values of Common Cause."

— JOHN B. LARSON, D-CT
CHAIRMAN OF THE TASK FORCE ON ELECTION REFORM

Highlights by the Numbers



16/175
16 states and 175 municipalities

where voters or state legislatures have formally called on Congress to pass a constitutional amendment overturning Citizens United and place reasonable limits on political spending.



60

60 votes required in the US Senate to end a filibuster on a bill.

Common Cause helped end filibustering on presidential nominees and is pushing to end the all-too-frequent practice of requiring 60 votes to pass every piece of legislation.



\$1 million

California's record fine levied on a pair of non-profit groups linked to Charles and David Koch for funneling \$15 million in anonymous money into two state ballot initiative campaigns. A Common Cause complaint sparked the investigation.



200,000

Petition signatures delivered to the Federal Communications Commission by Common Cause and its allies before the FCC indefinitely put on hold a vote that would have allowed Rupert Murdoch to acquire more media outlets.



3,200

The number of volunteers that Common Cause recruited in a massive, 18-state, 2012 Election Day effort to protect voting rights.



10

10 States where Common Cause challenged efforts to restrict access to voting and played key roles in eliminating hurdles set to deter eligible voters.



\$1,000

Thanks to Rhode Island's first-in-the-nation disclosure bill, independent outside groups must report within 24 hours when they spend at least \$1,000 to influence elections, thanks to Common Cause's advocacy.



At least 9

Annual conferences Common Cause will convene over the next decade to feature coalition partners, activists, scholars and influential thinkers as we seek to build a blueprint for a great democracy.



100+

The number of screenings throughout the nation Common Cause organized of Bill Moyers' documentary, "The United States of ALEC." The film used interviews and documents provided by Common Cause to shed light on ALEC's vast network of secret, corporate lobbying to pass bills that increase corporate profits at the public's expense.



1 million

Comments filed at the Security and Exchange Commission on a rulemaking petition calling on them to require corporations to disclose political spending to shareholders.



Our Common Cause: Reclaiming and Renewing Democracy

America today is facing a perfect storm of money, politics, and secrecy.

From big businesses and Wall Street pouring \$4 billion into the 2012 elections to get their way at a cost to the rest of us, to state legislatures and governors erecting barriers to voting for millions, to Supreme Court justices attending secret political strategy sessions with the Koch brothers, American democracy is in peril.

And Common Cause is leading the movement to save it.

Founded more than 40 years ago by John Gardner, Common Cause and its 400,000 members and supporters nationwide are fighting to reclaim a democracy that is of, for and by the people — not bought and owned by the special interests.

Using our network of 35 state organizations and Washington DC headquarters, Common Cause and its public education affiliate, the Common Cause Education Fund, work to combat the influence of big money in our elections and to empower people to make their voices heard in the political process. We're on the forefront of fights to protect and strengthen voting rights, enforce the highest ethical standards for elected and public officials, end government gridlock, and ensure the free flow of information for an informed democracy.

Common Cause is a strategic, forward-thinking and ambitious convener of groups that share similar goals.

We believe Americans deserve open, honest and accountable government. With your help, we're working to deliver it.



COMMON CAUSE EDUCATION FUND

Much of our work to increase public understanding of the democratic process and our goals for strengthening our democracy nationally and in the states is sponsored by Common Cause's 501(c)(3) affiliate, the Common Cause Education Fund. Over the past two years, the Education Fund has made possible research reports on money and politics, voting issues and media reform. It has also produced countless public events, including town hall meetings, forums and more than 100 screenings throughout the nation of a Bill Moyers documentary that relied heavily on Common Cause research, "The United States of ALEC." The Education Fund has convened policy experts on critical issues like redistricting and election protection, and two national conferences. It recruited and trained poll monitors for the 2012 elections, including college students in nine states, and held webinar trainings for activists looking to initiate local campaigns to press for a constitutional amendment to overturn Citizens United. The Education Fund has used op-eds, media outreach and social media to highlight work related to the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, the filibuster, voter suppression and media consolidation. Outreach to diverse groups has allowed work in coalition on shared goals, broadening the organization's impact. Support for the Common Cause Education Fund comes from foundations and individuals.



Voting and Elections: Making Every Vote Count

The right to vote is the centerpiece of American democracy. Our elections are the one time when every American has an equal say, and an equal voice. Common Cause's work to preserve and strengthen voting rights is the heart of our mission.

Today, the voting rights of millions of Americans are under attack. In 2013, the US Supreme Court ignored ongoing discrimination at the polls and gutted a portion of the Voting Rights Act that required states with a history of discrimination to get federal approval before changing their voting laws.

Meanwhile, well-funded partisans across the nation are making it harder for eligible voters to cast ballots. In some states, they've won enactment of laws that, among other things, limit registration and voting hours and days and put other burdensome requirements on voters.

These forces are not subtle. In 2012, one organization announced plans to challenge voters' eligibility at the polls, while residents in some urban communities woke up to billboards erected to discourage voter turnout.

Common Cause is standing up to these ballot bullies. We're determined to ensure that every eligible voter can cast a ballot and have it counted as cast.

During the 2012 mid-term elections, more than 3,000 Common Cause volunteers helped monitor precincts in 18 states where ballot vigilantes had threatened to harass would-be voters. Prior to the elections, Common Cause released reports that drew national attention to potential election problems in the states. We pushed an advertising company to pull down billboards designed to intimidate minority voters. And when Super Storm Sandy devastated the mid-Atlantic coast days before the election, we worked with Republican and Democratic governors in New Jersey and New York to help displaced voters cast ballots at out-of-town precincts.



Over the last two years, Common Cause played key roles in winning or implementing programs to make voting accessible for those eligible, including Maryland's expansion of registration during early voting, California and Connecticut's Election Day registration, and online voter registration victories in Hawaii, Illinois and California, where the change resulted in nearly 1 million new voters in 2012 alone. In Maryland, Common Cause paved the way for voters to vote by mail in special elections. And in Colorado, Common Cause helped secure passage of a new law that dramatically expands voter registration opportunities, gives every voter the option of voting in person or by mail, and ensures that voters who relocate will remain registered so long as they continue to live in Colorado.

Common Cause's state organizations also played a key role in pushing back on efforts to make voting harder. In Pennsylvania, Common Cause was part of the successful effort to restrain the state's new onerous voter



With voting laws and regulations generally made at state and local levels, Common Cause chapters across the country work year-round with election officials, legislators and partners to simplify voter registration, facilitate early voting, shorten lines at polling places, and ensure secure, accurate vote counts. As this report is being written, we are gearing up to protect the vote in 2014.

The Internet has become a cornerstone of the American economy and American life. Millions of us pay our taxes and our monthly bills, do our banking, stay connected to friends and family, and even buy groceries online.

Working closely with our partner Verified Voting, Common Cause conducts a robust program that works to fight for integrity and transparency in our elections, with a particular focus on safeguarding elections run on computerized voting technology in the coming elections. We have fought to stop federal funding to support Internet voting in the states. We persuaded the Department of Defense to reverse itself and publicly acknowledge the security vulnerabilities of Internet voting for overseas military. Working with election administrators and cyber-security experts, we have helped stop legislation in several states that would have allowed Internet voting, and we continue to work to educate election officials, policymakers, and the public — including youth leaders — about cyber security risks.

When Americans go to the polls, we're supposed to choose our leaders. The sad truth is that in much of the country, our leaders choose us.

Common Cause is working to take partisanship out of the redistricting process. Our leadership in California led to creation of a non-partisan citizens redistricting commission that has become a model for reform efforts across the nation. Building on that success, we have been able to convene leaders in the voting rights and civil rights communities to discuss shared principles, goals and strategies.

Colorado: A Victory for Voting and Elections

Pushed by Common Cause Colorado, the Centennial State's legislature passed a sweeping Voter Access and Modernized Elections Act in 2013. Hailed by a Washington Post columnist as a "model for other voting reforms in other states," the law requires that a ballot be mailed to every registered voter. Voters then choose whether they'll cast it by mail, drop it off at a designated location or vote in person early or on Election Day.

The law also lifts the deadline for voter registration. This allows voters to register on Election Day, lengthens the state's early voting period and shortens the time required for state residency in order to qualify to vote. Last but not least, people can now vote at any location within their county.

The New York Times

Published: September 21, 2012

EDITORIAL

Voter Harassment, Circa 2012

...True the Vote, now active in 30 states, hopes to train hundreds of thousands of poll watchers to make the experience of voting like "driving and seeing the police following you," as one of the group's leaders put it. (Not surprisingly, the group is also active in the voter ID movement, with similar goals.) These activities "present a real danger to the fair administration of elections and to the fundamental freedom to vote," as a recent report by Common Cause and Demos put it...

REPORTS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

To get ready for the 2012 elections, Common Cause produced reports with Demos, Fair Elections Network, the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, the Verified Vote Foundation, and the Rutgers School of Law.

- **Bullies at the Ballot Box: Protecting the Freedom To Vote Against Wrongful Challenges and Intimidation** analyzed laws in 10 key states governing voter intimidation and organized efforts to bully voters at polling places.
- **Counting Votes 2012: A State by State Look at Election Preparedness** examined the weaknesses in state laws safeguarding voting rights, the machinery of US elections, and the Election-day preparedness of state officials.
- **Got ID? Helping Americans Get Voter Identification** exposed that millions of citizens may be unable to exercise their right to vote due to restrictive laws and discussed potential "best-practices."
- **Deceptive Election Practices and Voter Intimidation: The Need for Voter Protection** reported deceptive election practices that targeted voters across the country and provided recommendations for solutions at the local, state, and federal levels.



Money in Politics: Putting Voters First

MONEY AND SECRECY IN POLITICS THREATENS DEMOCRACY

In 2012, candidates, political parties, political action committees and non-profit groups spent nearly \$7 billion — roughly \$1 billion of it from hidden donors — to influence federal elections. At least \$2.7 billion more went into state campaigns.

That money, combined with the billions more spent on lobbying, has bought access and influence for donors and bred legions of officeholders who are more focused on serving their big donors than their constituents. The need to constantly fundraise discourages talented people from pursuing public service, and drives some conscientious veteran lawmakers to retire early. Because much of the money comes from secret donors, voters lack clear knowledge of who's actually funding a particular candidate or initiative, and what his or her agenda is. Voters don't know who paid for the ads, calls, or direct mail that attempt to influence them — or what the funders expect from politicians in return for money spent.

And things are getting worse. By the end of 2013, nearly a year before the 2014 mid-term elections, Senate and House candidates had raised nearly \$600 million for the fall campaign. Super PACs whose issue advocacy often plays a critical role in helping some candidates and tearing down others, had raised nearly \$140 million.

Common Cause is committed to an America where good ideas and the public interest are more important than big money in deciding elections and shaping public policy. We're fighting on multiple fronts to secure it.

Massachusetts: A Victory in Tamping Down Outside Spending

In 2012, US Senate candidates Scott Brown and Elizabeth Warren made a historic deal that stemmed the flow of out-of-state “dark money” money into their contest and helped them focus on issues that mattered to Bay State residents.

The “People’s Pledge” adopted by Brown and Warren attracted national attention as both candidates promised to make a charitable donation equal to 50 percent of any funds spent by outside groups on television or Internet advertising. A Common Cause Massachusetts study conducted after the election found that outside groups provided just 9 percent of the funds spent in the Brown-Warren race, compared to 62 percent and 64 percent for similarly hard-fought contests in Virginia and Wisconsin, and confirming the pledge as a promising model for races in other states.

Another post-election study found that the pledge also elevated the overall level of the campaign. About 36 percent of the TV ads used in the Massachusetts race were judged negative, compared to 84 percent in Virginia, Wisconsin and Ohio.



Maryland: A Victory in Limiting Big Money

Common Cause Maryland was the driving force behind passage in 2013 of major campaign finance and ethics reforms. State lawmakers closed a loophole that allowed limited liability companies and out-of-state political action committees to make unlimited political contributions.

The legislative package also expanded disclosure requirements for political spending by “independent” groups and for contractors doing business with the state; other advancements include improved public access to key financial information about state elected officials and a new system that allows citizens to view legislators’ ethics and conflict of interest forms online.



AMEND USA: A MOVEMENT FOR SENSIBLE SPENDING LIMITS

In 16 states and nearly 500 localities, our Amend USA campaign, formerly known as Amend2012, helped persuade voters and/or elected officials to ask Congress for a constitutional amendment permitting sensible limits on political spending. Common Cause Colorado led a 2012 ballot initiative in which more than seven in 10 voters backed an amendment; we’ve played a key role in similar landslide victories in Montana, hundreds of towns nationwide, and cities including New York, Chicago, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

WORKING FOR TRANSPARENCY AND DISCLOSURE

Common Cause is working to bring hundreds of millions in political “dark money” into the sunshine. We’ve urged the Securities and Exchange Commission to ensure that shareholders and voters are told when corporations spend money to influence our votes. And at the Federal Communications Commission, we’re lobbying on behalf of citizens for enforcement of a longstanding rule requiring broadcasters to disclose who is paying for political advertising.

At the state level, we’ve documented the oil and natural gas industry’s multi-million dollar investments in Pennsylvania, New York and Ohio politics and the rewards: lax regulations and weakened clean water laws that ease the industry’s quest for natural gas using hydraulic fracturing, or fracking.

Rhode Island: A Victory in Exposing Dark Money

Common Cause championed a first-in-the-nation disclosure law that sheds light on anonymous money spent in state elections. In 2012, Rhode Island passed a bill that puts an end to the shell game of hiding donors by moving money between politically active social welfare groups. The law requires that with some exceptions, groups that spend \$1,000 or more on broadcast ads close to an election, or on another campaign-related expenses, must disclose the spending and their donors within 24 hours.



California: Exposing Anonymous Money

Common Cause California's complaint to election officials led to a record \$1 million fine for two Arizona non-profit groups that pumped \$15 million from hidden donors into two state ballot initiative campaigns in 2012. The groups were linked to billionaire industrialists and political activists Charles and David Koch. Along with the fine, California has asked the two groups that received the money to pay the \$15 million into the state's general fund.



FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC FINANCING

In states including California, Hawaii, New Mexico, New York and North Carolina, Common Cause has been central to campaigns to pass, strengthen or defend systems that provide full or partial public financing of political campaigns.

During 2012, California Common Cause secured passage of reforms making the matching funds system in Los Angeles more responsive to small-dollar donors and more attractive to candidates. In New Mexico, our leadership in 2013 persuaded the state legislature to adopt a matching funds system to replace another public financing mechanism declared invalid by the Supreme Court. Though we suffered a setback in Hawaii, where a conference committee killed a public financing plan we had steered through both houses of the legislature, the outcome left us well-positioned for a fresh push in 2014. Similarly, our multi-year battle for public financing in New York state nearly succeeded and we persuaded Gov. Andrew Cuomo to include the plan in his 2014 budget proposal.

New York: Connecting the Dots Between Contributions and Fracking

A series of “Deep Drilling, Deep Pockets” reports by Common Cause New York documented the six-year, \$64 million investment by energy interests in lobbying and political contributions. The reports demonstrated that the two most vocal state legislators supporting fracking are also the largest recipients of contributions from pro-fracking interests, triggering intense public scrutiny.

Fracking has turned a massive natural gas field stretching from West Virginia through upstate New York into a potential gold mine for energy producers. But there are major questions about the environmental impact of the drilling, which involves the injection of a powerful chemical cocktail into layers of shale deep underground. The need to expose the industry’s ties at every level of government is critical.



BLOWING THE WHISTLE ON ALEC

If you’ve heard of the American Legislative Exchange Council, or ALEC, it’s likely because Common Cause and the Center for Media and Democracy worked together in 2012 to expose the secret inner workings and corporate money behind this group that teams big business leaders with conservative state lawmakers, who then work together in back rooms to write laws that will benefit their bottom line, not the rest of us. Based on substantial evidence that ALEC is principally organized to lobby for legislation that benefits the narrow interests of its corporate members, Common Cause filed a formal whistleblower complaint with the Internal Revenue Service, challenging ALEC’s charitable tax status. Under pressure from our ally Color of Change and others, dozens of corporations, from General Electric to Walmart, Coca-Cola and McDonalds, abandoned ALEC. And recently the organization announced its intention to create a new arm that would allow it to lobby and not run afoul of IRS rules — essentially conceding Common Cause’s claim that it had been lobbying illegally under its former tax code. To help educate people on ALEC, Common Cause organized more than 100 screenings of Bill Moyers’ documentary, “The United States of ALEC” in 28 states.



Championing Ethics: Demanding Accountability

STOPPING THE FILIBUSTER

The US Senate is broken, and Common Cause is committed to fixing it.

Filibustering senators have blocked discussion of nearly 400 bills and nominations since 2006. The filibuster rule's 60-vote threshold has become a de facto supermajority requirement over all Senate business.

Common Cause took on filibuster reform as a core Common Cause program in the spring of 2010, and has spent three years calling on the Senate to reform its rules and raising the profile of this procedural issue. At first a lone voice in the community, Common Cause continued to make the case that filibuster reform was critical to any return to deliberation and a functioning government, in hundreds of meetings with Senate stakeholders — in federal court, in the press, in public education efforts, and with a broad coalition of allies.

In May 2012, Common Cause filed a groundbreaking federal lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the 60-vote filibuster rule.

Over the past two years, we have played a key role in a national lobbying and public education campaign that culminated in a historic Senate vote rolling back a key portion of the filibuster rule in November 2013. The change allows the Senate to confirm presidential nominees for most federal judgeships, cabinet positions and other executive branch jobs with a simple majority vote, 51 senators, as the Constitution intends. Previously, confirmation effectively required a 60-vote supermajority, with as few as 41 senators able to use the filibuster rule to block debate and action. The 60-vote rule remains in place for all legislation that comes to the Senate floor.

Common Cause continues to appeal its lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the filibuster role, *Common Cause v. Biden*.

For us, the fight goes on until it is settled that the 60-vote rule is inconsistent with democracy and the Constitution.

STOPPING PAY-TO-PLAY AT THE WHITE HOUSE

In early in 2013, when some of President Obama’s closest associates dabbled with a scheme to provide special meetings with the President to major fundraisers and donors to his political campaigns, Common Cause cried foul. “Access to the President should never be for sale,” the organization declared as plans for “Organizing for Action,” an “independent” group supporting the administration, came to light.

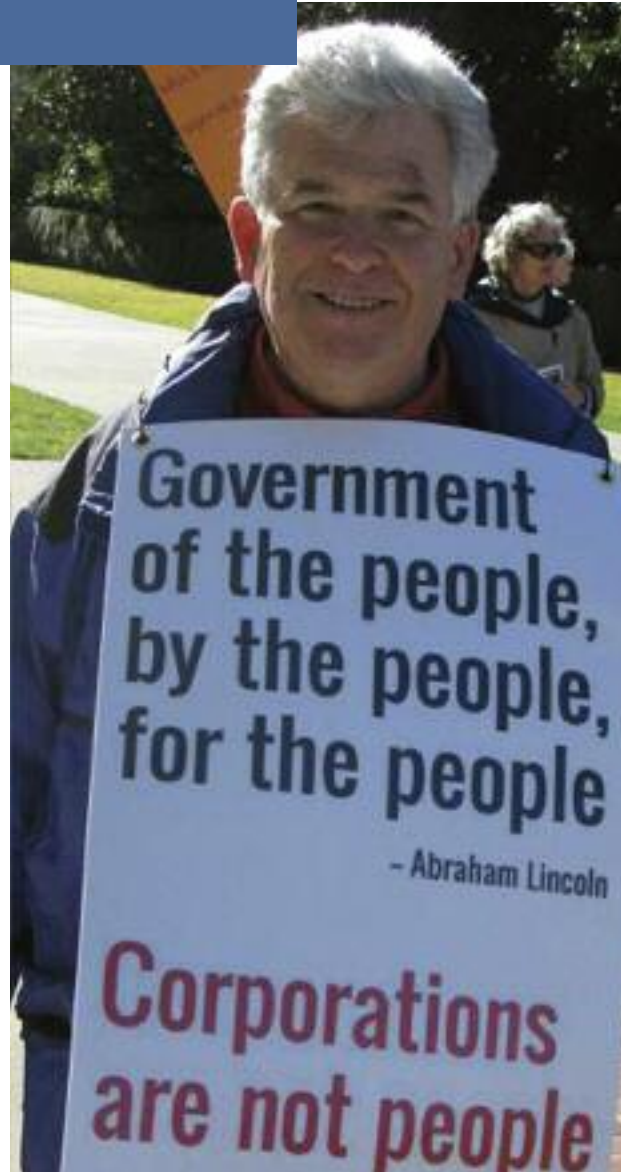
OFA’s organizers quickly abandoned the pay-to-play idea and dropped plans to accept corporate contributions. The group also agreed to make full disclosure of all donations of \$250 or more.

DEMANDING HIGH STANDARDS OF OUR HIGHEST COURT

Americans look to the Supreme Court to serve as the ultimate arbiter of our nation’s most important disagreements. But what happens when the arbiter — or “umpire” as Chief Justice John Roberts has described the court — starts taking sides?

Common Cause has called out several members of the court for violating longstanding ethical standards requiring judges to stay out of partisan politics and limit their involvement in fundraising activities for civic and charitable groups. At least three justices have served as featured guests at fundraising events for the Federalist Society, a lawyers’ group.

Common Cause also supports the “Supreme Court Ethics Act,” legislation pending in Congress that would bring the high court under the “Code of Conduct for United States Judges.” The justices currently are exempt from the code, which lays down a set of ethical standards covering all other federal judges.





Media and Democracy: Advocating for the Public Interest

INFORMED CITIZENS

The free flow of information is vital to a healthy democracy, therefore Common Cause is committed to protecting and nurturing it.

In 2012, Common Cause rejuvenated its Media and Democracy Reform Initiative, bringing aboard former Federal Communications Commission (FCC) member Michael Copps as a special adviser. Using time-tested tools of research, lobbying and advocacy, we are raising awareness about threats to the availability of news and information, and building support for steps to strengthen it.

THE THREAT TO NET NEUTRALITY

The Internet is history's largest and most vibrant forum for the exchange of ideas and information and Common Cause is working to keep it that way. When Verizon challenged in federal court the FCC rules that protect online free speech by requiring Internet service providers to give equal treatment to all lawful websites and applications, Common Cause went into overdrive to alert activists to what was at stake. To bring the message to a new and wider audience, Common Cause teamed with an online graphic magazine, Symbolia, to produce and distribute a cartoon about Verizon's challenge. After a federal court struck down those rules, we joined in a national effort that collected more than 1 million signatures on petitions urging the FCC to restore the rules. The issue has generated some of Common Cause's highest web traffic.

CLOSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

The US has fallen behind other developed nations in making affordable and accessible broadband service available to every citizen. We believe that's unacceptable.

In 2012, Common Cause published a report on municipal broadband and its proven ability to deliver high quality broadband, particularly in small communities and rural areas where such services are often unavailable from commercial providers. The report highlighted ALEC's efforts to eliminate municipal broadband. We also have lobbied the FCC and Congress and editorialized on behalf of strong universal service fund (USF) programs that provide schools, classrooms, health care providers, and libraries with access to advanced telecommunications services.

WHO'S BEHIND THOSE ADS?

In the autumn of every election year, American television viewers are subjected to the political equivalent of mud wrestling. Candidates, political parties and, increasingly, "independent" groups accountable to no one, bombard us with advertisements that distort or trivialize critical issues and lie about the backgrounds and beliefs of candidates and officeholders. Who is behind all these ads?

To find out, Common Cause promoted an online petition that urged the FCC to enforce a longstanding regulation requiring broadcasters to publicly disclose the "true identity" of the purchasers of political ads. The petition generated 60,000 signatures in 10 days, demonstrating that voters want the full story when they go to the polls.

MEDIA MONOPOLIES DON'T DELIVER THE NEWS AND INFORMATION OUR DEMOCRACY DEMANDS

Waves of mergers and consolidation — often blessed by the FCC — have created a media ecosystem more driven by the pursuit of profit than by its responsibility to inform the electorate. Too much of our corporate, consolidated media ignores local issues of import, and fails to reflect our nation's cherished diversity. As a result, Common Cause supports media ownership rules that protect diversity and promote quality reporting.

To protect the integrity of local media, Common Cause led a coalition that successfully organized national opposition to the rumored sale of the *Los Angeles Tribune*, *Chicago Tribune* and other major daily papers to industrialists Charles and David Koch, a pair of ideologues with no journalistic experience and no ties to the cities involved.

“Without media that dig for facts, report real news, and reflect the diversity of our nation, self-government cannot endure.”

—MICHAEL COPPS, SPECIAL ADVISER TO COMMON CAUSE'S MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY REFORM INITIATIVE.





State Victories: Help Level the Playing Field

Working simultaneously at the federal and state levels is part of Common Cause's strategy to level election playing-fields. Some hard-earned wins at the state level assure that fairer elections are in sight for all Americans. Additional highlights of state work over 2012 and 2013 include:

CONNECTICUT: Lobbying by Common Cause was instrumental in the passage of legislation permitting voters to register online or at the polls on Election Day.

DELAWARE: The state legislature passed a Common Cause-backed bill to require disclosure of all independent expenditures in excess of \$10,000. Our strategic influence also contributed to a new law requiring lobbyists to report the bills on which they are working.

FLORIDA: Common Cause uncovered a state lawmaker who introduced corporate tax cut legislation that was copied word-for-word from a "model" bill drafted by the ALEC. The disclosure generated national headlines as the legislator neglected to remove ALEC's name from the bill text, effectively acknowledging that it was written for her.

GEORGIA: Common Cause led a bipartisan coalition that secured the state's first law limiting gift-giving to public officials.

HAWAII: A lobbying campaign headed by Common Cause led to passage of a system of online voter registration to be in place for the 2016 election.

ILLINOIS: Common Cause helped secure passage of legislation allowing voters to register online. We also figured prominently in the legislature's approval of a resolution calling for a constitutional amendment to reverse Citizens United.

INDIANA: Common Cause Indiana challenged a state law to ensure that voters of the state's most populous county have their voices heard at the polls when it comes to electing judges. State law permits each of the major political parties to conduct primary elections in Marion County to fill exactly half of the judicial seats; voters who do not take part in the primary are effectively excluded from the selection process and voters who participate have a voice in only half of the selections. The suit is pending.



KENTUCKY: Ballot security concerns raised by Common Cause Kentucky led lawmakers to strengthen legislation that would have permitted service members stationed overseas to return their absentee ballots over the Internet.

LOUISIANA: Common Cause helped derail legislation that would have given many professionals a license to engage in blatant conflicts of interest when working on public projects.

MICHIGAN: Common Cause successfully lobbied Governor Rick Snyder to veto a discriminatory Voter ID law.

MINNESOTA: Through Coalition for Impartial Justice, Common Cause pushed statewide for passage of the Impartial Justice Act, a bill to end contested judicial elections and replace them with a system of “retention elections,” in which voters could decide to remove a judge, with a replacement to be appointed by the governor using a merit selection system.

NEBRASKA: A report by Common Cause revealed that TransCanada, developer of the controversial Keystone XL pipeline, is the state’s biggest-spending lobbyist.

NEW MEXICO: Common Cause lobbying helped pass legislation to fix New Mexico’s public finance system for state races, encouraging fundraising of small donations of \$100 or less with matching public funds. We also helped earn passage of a bill that requires notices of public meetings to be posted physically and electronically at least 72 hours in advance.

NORTH CAROLINA: Common Cause joined in a lawsuit under the federal Voting Rights Act challenging a new voter ID law that could disenfranchise more than 300,000 North Carolinians.

OHIO: In the run up to the 2012 election, Common Cause successfully fought attempts to limit opportunities for early voting in Ohio.

OKLAHOMA: Common Cause helped organize a 600-person protest at a national meeting of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) in Oklahoma City. Common Cause also used the occasion to screen Bill Moyers’ documentary, “The United States of ALEC,” one of more than 100 screenings the organization held throughout the nation.

OREGON: A Common Cause report detailed links between members of the Oregon legislature and ALEC.

SOUTH CAROLINA: Common Cause spearheaded a campaign on behalf of a major ethics reform bill, securing passage in the House of Representatives; the legislation fell just short in the state Senate.

UTAH: A report by Common Cause and allied organizations documented how Utah lawmakers repeatedly copied and introduced “model” legislation drafted by ALEC.

VERMONT: Common Cause, with help from the National Institute on Money in State Politics, created the state’s first fully searchable database of campaign contributions, making information about political spending in Vermont far more useful and transparent.

WISCONSIN: Common Cause led a year-long effort that catapulted non-partisan redistricting reform into a statewide issue. Fifteen daily newspapers, dozens of legislators and tens of thousands of citizens have now joined in calls for an end to hyper-partisan gerrymandering and are demanding a public hearing on the subject.



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ACTIVISTS

Coming of age in a difficult economy, often burdened with student debt, and alienated by a political system dominated by big money and gridlock, it's no wonder that millennials — people born between 1980 and 2000 — are skeptical that they can influence government to address the economic, social and environmental issues facing their world today and for the future. That makes it all the more important for Common Cause to create opportunities for younger Americans to engage in issues and campaigns where they can see that their talents, contributions and leadership matter, and that they do indeed have a stake in the process of democracy.

Some examples of our work in this area:

- In California, we hold an annual three-day student activist training that brings together a diverse group of 30 students from all over the state to build skills in public speaking, campaign planning, advocacy and media outreach, coalition building and leadership. Many students have gone on to start campus groups and host Common Cause events.
- In North Carolina, Common Cause continues a robust outreach program working with historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) to organize campus discussions, student internships and opportunities including a lobby day at the state legislature where students lobby their elected officials on issues important to them, from tuition and student debt to voter IDs.
- We recruited and trained students to serve as poll monitors on Election Day 2012, in response to threats to challenge voters at the polls. Student “democracy fellows” in Colorado, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Texas also recruited fellow students through “coffee break” discussions and film screenings.
- Common Cause organized protests at Sallie Mae’s 2013 shareholders meeting, with students coming from Delaware and surrounding states to call for change in student debt policy and chastise the company for its participation in ALEC.
- And through our national internship program, Common Cause provides millennials with opportunities to participate in the work of democracy reform up close.



“Common Cause has defended our democracy for decades, rallying citizens to support open and accountable government against corrosive interests and warped incentives. Digital engagement is crucial to expanding public awareness and mobilizing action on our most pressing issues, and I’m thrilled to collaborate with distinguished leaders and policy experts to re-imagine a great democracy powered by networked advocacy.”

— VANCE HICKIN, 2014 BLUEPRINT FELLOW AND
DIGITAL STRATEGIST.

BUILDING A BLUEPRINT FOR A GREAT DEMOCRACY

Rome was not built in a day; nor can a great democracy be rebuilt. Building a Blueprint for a Great Democracy is a 10-year initiative of the Common Cause Education Fund, with support from the WhyNot Initiative, to develop a vision and series of strategies that empower the United States to reclaim and remain a government truly of, for and by the people. Common Cause will convene annual meetings and smaller regional gatherings to address a broad set of democracy challenges, forging consensus and finding solutions for best attacking the problems.

Blueprint commenced in 2013, along with the gathering of the first class of George S. McGovern Great Democracy Fellows. The Fellows Program offers scholars, reform leaders, journalists and other distinguished figures a platform to raise to the media and public the visibility of their ideas and endeavor to improve democracy. Their work will be showcased at Blueprint conferences.

THE LESSONS OF WATERGATE CONTINUE TO MOTIVATE

Forty years after the Watergate scandal exposed the corrupting power of secret money and Presidential abuse of power, Common Cause convened *The Lessons of Watergate*, a two-day conference at the National Press Club in Washington, DC in March 2013, attended by more than 200 people. The conference commemorated the most important American political scandal of the 20th century, looking at what happened, how the extraordinary response unfolded, and why the lessons of Watergate are so important for us today. Speakers included key Watergate figures such as the Hon. Liz Holtzman and William S. Cohen, both of whom served on the House Judiciary Committee during Watergate; Francis O’Brien, chief of staff to the committee chair; Assistant Special Prosecutor Jill Wine-Banks; Daniel Ellsberg, who released the Pentagon Papers; journalists who covered Watergate; and former US Senator Russ Feingold.

Common Cause, just two years old as these events unfolded, emerged during Watergate as a major force for open, honest and accountable government.



Rita Lewis



Marilyn Fuchs

THEIR CAUSE IS COMMON, THEIR DEDICATION IS EXTRAORDINARY

Decades separate the date that Rita Lewis and Marilyn Fuchs began volunteering at Common Cause's national headquarters. But their commitment to the organization and the camaraderie they discovered as Washington Connection volunteers runs equally deep. More than 25 years ago, Rita retired from teaching at a public elementary school. Light-hearted and still filled with determination, Rita wanted to do something that had "nothing to do with children, yet bettered society." A member of Common Cause since soon after its founding, Rita found that change at Common Cause. Out of the classroom and working with adults, Rita was still educating.

That same desire to give back led Marilyn to Common Cause. A former clinical psychologist, Marilyn was taking art lessons and enjoying retirement. Then in 2013, she was struck with a need to do something more. Analytical by nature, Marilyn thought about the basis for a lot of our country's problems. Her answer, money and politics. "And who cares about that? Common Cause," Marilyn said.

Rita and Marilyn visit Common Cause every Tuesday for a few hours. Rita said there are few organizations that utilize volunteers well, but she feels her time at Common Cause is meaningful. Over the decades, Rita has made telephone calls urging passage of legislation, attended hearings and demonstrations, stuffed envelopes and reached countless people with Common Cause's message.

Marilyn also appreciates that Common Cause takes its volunteers seriously. Whether it's a mailing or phone calls to urge activism, volunteers are briefed and given context about what they are doing and why it is important. This background makes activities even more worthwhile and boosts confidence.

For all that Common Cause's volunteers contribute, it's good to learn that they have gained the friendship of staff and fellow volunteers. As Rita stated, "It's still a warm and welcoming place. They respect the volunteers — always have and always will. We are treated like adults." And with good reason. Common Cause volunteers and staff share the same passion and drive to improve democracy.

Thank you to Rita, Marilyn and every Common Cause volunteer for amplifying the voice of Common Cause and everyone we work to protect and represent, together.

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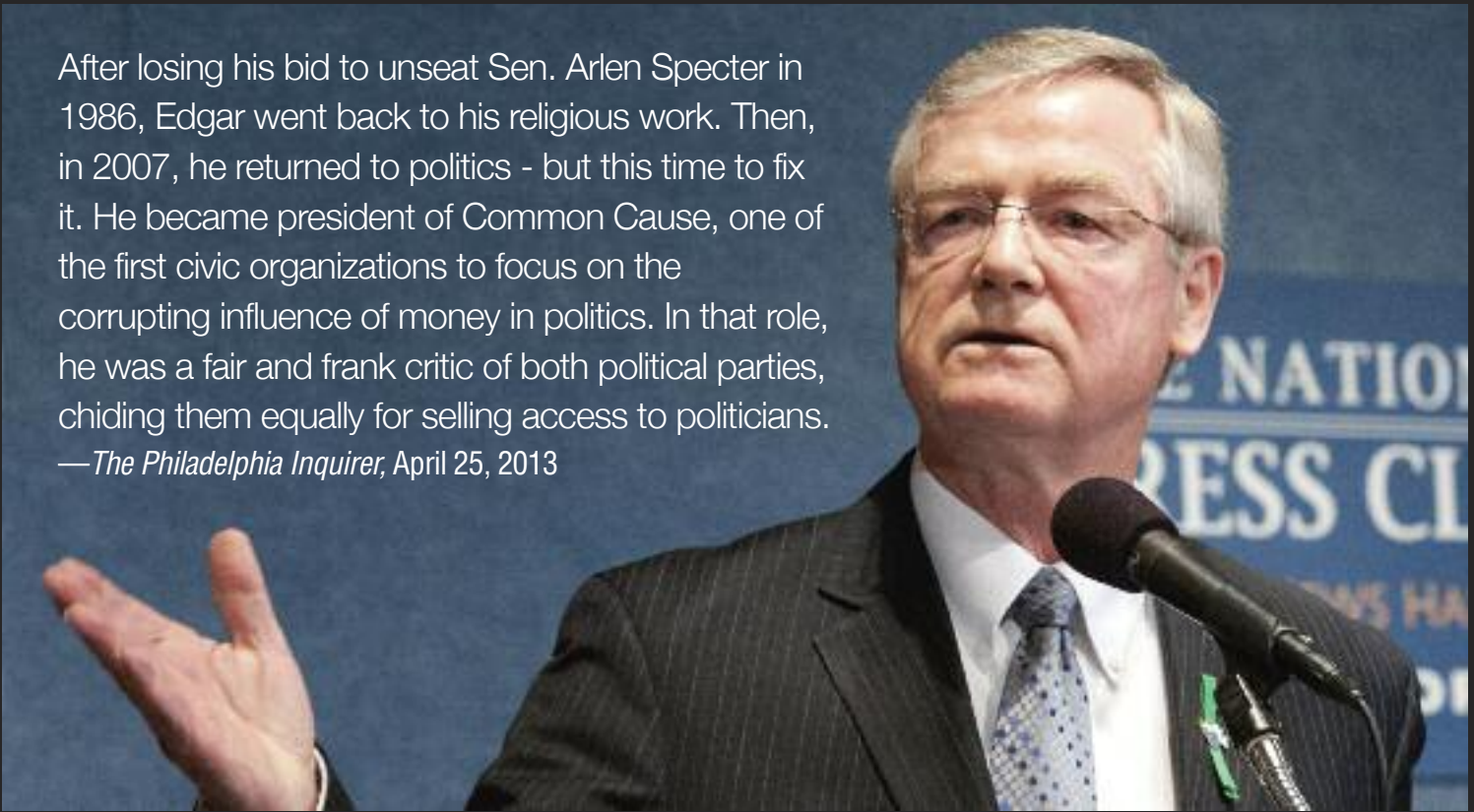
DONALD & BARBARA BREDTHAUER: PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF COMMON CAUSE

Donald and Barbara Bredthauer believe in our nation, and in a strong and healthy democracy. Based on their trust in Common Cause to help deliver that, Donald and Barbara have named Common Cause as a beneficiary of their estate plans.

The Bredthauers first learned about the work of Common Cause some 40 years ago when the organization was just getting started. Throughout their marriage, they have avidly followed the work of Common Cause and supported it.

People of faith, the Bredthauers believe that social justice and a focus on the common good are part of a vibrant democracy. They worry that one of the biggest threats to a just society is the corrupting influence of big money in our politics. Donald and Barbara believe that Common Cause works effectively to lift the voices of everyday people in our democracy by fighting against big money, and for an open and accountable government.

After losing his bid to unseat Sen. Arlen Specter in 1986, Edgar went back to his religious work. Then, in 2007, he returned to politics - but this time to fix it. He became president of Common Cause, one of the first civic organizations to focus on the corrupting influence of money in politics. In that role, he was a fair and frank critic of both political parties, chiding them equally for selling access to politicians. —*The Philadelphia Inquirer*, April 25, 2013



IN MEMORIAM: BOB EDGAR 1943-2013

Bob Edgar's passion, enthusiasm and commitment to the public interest was obvious. Longtime senior staff and the greenest volunteers were reminded that "we are the leaders, we've been waiting for," and that was, indeed, a mantra for his own life's work.

With his years of service, as a Methodist minister, a member of Congress, a college president and an interfaith leader, Bob brought great insight into the American spirit to his work as the president of Common Cause. A driven steward of democracy, and oftentimes its tenacious watchdog, Bob sought to bring back a democracy that is energized and trusted by its people.

Committed to a vision of government that works for the American people, not just corporations or lobbyists, Bob's leadership and optimism, a belief that if we work hard enough and smart enough we can effect change, is reflected in the goals, strategic campaigns and activities described in these pages. Bob's leadership in the successful campaign to reform the filibuster is a case in point. He believed change was possible and insisted that Common Cause get out there in front despite what many others saw as slim odds. We filed a lawsuit, we pushed Senate leaders and our allies, and gradually our ranks swelled to become the Fix the Senate campaign. Last November the Senate voted to abolish filibusters for most presidential nominations. That is quite a legacy and a tribute to Bob Edgar's spirit and determination.

Yes, at times democracy feels fragile in the face of attacks by special interests. Following the persistence and passion of a leader like Bob Edgar, Common Cause will continue to work to realize a democracy worthy of the vision of its founders and its people.

Financial Statement

COMMON CAUSE AND COMMON CAUSE EDUCATION FUND

YEAR ENDED JUNE 30,	2013	2012
Revenue and Support		
Contributions	\$10,856,483	\$9,623,230
Contributed Services	944,985	421,444
Bequests	411,778	929,570
Contract Income	138,661	171,605
Rental Income	127,656	133,606
List Rentals and Other Income	50,395	26,039
Total Revenue and Support	12,529,958	11,305,494
Expense		
Program Services		
Educational Activities	4,248,384	3,288,143
Program Operations, Lobbying, and Communications	3,503,332	3,136,996
Program Development and Management	776,762	719,191
Total program services	8,528,478	7,144,330
Supporting services		
General and Administrative	2,073,805	2,016,475
Fund Raising, including New Member Aquisitions	1,991,583	2,065,922
Total supporting services	4,065,388	4,082,397
Total expenses	12,593,866	11,226,727
Change in Net Assets from Operations	(63,908)	78,767
Investment Income (Loss)	164,461	(9,695)
Change in Net Assets	100,553	69,072
Net assets, July 1	2,861,075	2,792,003
Net assets, June 30	\$2,961,628	\$2,861,075

THANK YOU

The generous support of our members and donors is indispensable to the work of Common Cause and the Common Cause Education Fund. We are gratified by the optimism and trust—both in Common Cause and America’s future—that such support demonstrates. The following are grants and gifts of \$1,000 and more received in calendar years 2012 and 2013.

GRANTS TO THE COMMON CAUSE EDUCATION FUND

We appreciate the support from foundations and other granting agencies that have made it possible for us to conduct research, reach out to diverse partners and educate and inform the press, the public and policy makers about critical democracy issues.

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A special thank you to our partners nationwide.